



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort Sumter
National Monument

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Fort Sumter News Release

Release date: Immediate

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Date: March 26, 2004

Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie get new cannon carriages

Between Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie, the National Park Service has one of the best examples of Civil War era cannons in existence. Currently two of these guns, a 42-pounder at Fort Sumter and a 10-inch Columbiad at Fort Moultrie, are resting on blocks. Some time ago the carriages that once supported the cast iron cannon tubes became deteriorated and unsafe, and were dismantled. A lack of funding and staff has prevented the National Park Service from replacing those carriages – until now.



The carriage being replaced at Fort Sumter is almost identical to this one (left) under a 42-pounder Civil War cannon at Fort Sumter. These cannons fired 42-pound solid cannonballs. The carriage on the right is the one being replaced at Fort Sumter.

Thanks to a partnership with several organizations and dedicated volunteers, both of these carriages are about to be replaced. A brand new carriage for the 42-pounder rifled and banded cannon at Fort Sumter was constructed by the cooperation of the School of Building Arts, Virginia Military Institute, College of Charleston, The

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Citadel, Clemson University, and the Timber Framers Guild. At Fort Moultrie, National Park Service staff and volunteers worked to reconstruct a carriage for the 10-inch Columbiad cannon.

During the week of April 5, the final work on these projects will be completed. The carriages will be assembled and the cannons mounted. Nine additional cannons and carriages at both forts will be painted as well. Over 5,900 hours, the equivalent of \$94,695 in labor, will have been donated to the National Park Service to construct the carriages, mount the cannons, and paint all eleven cannons and carriages.

“We’ve known for years that this work needed to be done,” said Fort Sumter National Monument Superintendent John Tucker. “With the number of staff that the park can afford, it just was not possible. We owe everyone who contributed to these projects a debt of gratitude. Having those guns back in place will be a real improvement to Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie.”

In addition to these projects, staff and volunteers also reconstructed the Fort Moultrie gin pole exhibit. The exhibit demonstrated how cannon tubes were lifted onto their carriages historically using block and tackle with large timbers. This exhibit was severely damaged as a result of Hurricane Hugo in 1989 and was dismantled. The gin pole exhibit will also be placed at Fort Moultrie during the week of April 5.



Volunteers and staff work to assemble parts of a Fort Sumter cannon carriage during a work weekend in Virginia.

The National Park Service invites the public to come and experience the improvements. Fort Sumter is open daily, with ferry service leaving from the Fort Sumter Visitor Education Center in downtown Charleston and Patriots Point in Mt. Pleasant. Fort Moultrie, a unit of Fort Sumter National Monument, is located on Sullivan’s Island and is open daily from 9:00-5:00. For more information call park headquarters at (843) 883-3123.

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